



ESSA Advisory Committee
February 26, 2019; Townsend Bldg., Dover, DE
Meeting Minutes

Committee Members Present: Sybil Baker, Dana Bowe, Sarah Bucic, Matthew Burrows, Heather Cramer, Tammy Croce, Candice Fifer, Anastasia Kynard, Shawn Larrimore, Kendall Massest, Mark McKenzie, Jon Sheehan, Deborah Stevens, Ashlee Upp, Kimberly Williams, Patrik Williams, Dover High School student

Committee Members Absent: James DeChene, Julie Johnson, Shawn Larrimore, John Marinucci, Laura Sturgeon

Others Present: Jenna Ahner, Christine Alois, Bob Bennett, Chantel Janiszewski, Kathy Kelly, Elizabeth Martinez, Jon Neubauer, Adrian Peoples, Mike Rodriguez, Lizzie Lewis Zubaca

OPENING

- Deputy Secretary Christine Alois thanked everyone in attendance and called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.
- Committee members and others in attendance introduced themselves and their affiliations.
- Primary focus for this Committee is to review implementation and progress of Delaware's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan.
- Public comment welcomed prior to conclusion of the meeting.
- A link was provided to everyone for interactive sharing of meeting PowerPoint presentation.
- Alois noted the department, when applicable, is including student representation to committee meetings.

DDOE's STRUCTURE/BACKGROUND TO ESSA's DEVELOPMENT

Delaware Department of Education (DDOE) Structure

- Alois provided a general overview of the department's organizational chart.
- The role of the deputy secretary is academic-focused and oversees the department's Academic Support, Educator Support and Student Support teams, including Performance Management and Data Management and Governance.
- Common goal of working collaboratively for continuous improvement.

Background to ESSA's Development

- ESSA was signed in to law on December 10, 2015 and was preceded by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, and was last reauthorized in 2002 through the No Child Left Behind Act. ESSA is more support-based and looks at continuous improvement in schools.
- For Delaware, a timeline from December 2015 to April 2017 that included stakeholder consultation meetings, internal working groups at DDOE, community conversations, the Governor's ESSA Advisory Committee and ESSA discussion groups led to the approved Delaware ESSA Plan. Once Delaware's ESSA Plan was completed, it was no longer required to have a continued Governor's ESSA Advisory Council. However, being the first year of ESSA plan implementation, department consensus was for the importance to gather multiple stakeholders to evaluate the progress of implementation.

CURRENT STATUS

Two significant items for this school year mandated by ESSA

1. Identification of Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI), Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI-1 and TSI-2) schools.
 - The Delaware School Success Framework (DSSF) was released on November 7, 2018.
 - Department staff are working closely with schools to develop plans for continuous improvement.
 - DDOE Student Support Team is working closely with CSI schools to develop needs assessments and plans.
 - Department is receiving good feedback from districts/charters on progress.
 - Supports also available for identified TSI-1 and TSI-2 (*TSI-2 schools under watch in some areas*). Reimagining Grants now available for these schools. Presently, there are more than 75 schools with intent to apply. Deadline has not closed yet for Reimagining Grants. TSI-1 schools can apply for up to \$100,000 for continuous improvement efforts, and TSI-2 can apply for up to \$25,000. Additionally, all schools have the option for continuous improvement funding, even if not identified for targeted support. The department is encouraging schools to work together within and across districts on grant application. If schools are working together, only one application is required. The department has already seen multiple schools and districts working together.
 - DDOE is working on expanding communications around this information to make the process as clear as possible. An additional page was added to DDOE's website dedicated to continuous improvement information for all stakeholders to access.
 - Alois noted two handouts provided to committee members that were developed as examples of information sheets for schools and the public. One handout describes ESSA and Delaware's ESSA plan; the other provides information on continuous improvement identification and how it works. Also mentioned, DDOE's Data Management and Governance team is working with groups such as the Forum to allow districts/charters to meet regularly and talk about the data to make it as transparent and understandable for stakeholders as possible.
 - DDOE continues to update the website and will be adding additional resources and information.
2. State Report Card - requiring specific information provided for state and district/charter report cards as reported on DDOE's website. Must include an overview section and a detail section.
 - The overview section for Delaware views as a "Snapshot," which provides information on school performance and progress.
 - The detailed section provides more in depth information on the data and is required information.
 - Alois noted DDOE staff Lindsay Lewis, Operations Support Team, led the initiative that took about 18 months and involved working with staff and many other stakeholder groups to gather information on what additional data should be shared and what the report card should look like.

At this point, Alois asked committee members to work together in a group activity to locate the Delaware Report Card and choose a district and/or school to review on DDOE's website. Members were asked to discuss questions posed on a handout and to note an additional handout that lists requirements for the report card to contain, according to ESSA.

Feedback shared after activity:

- Regarding "Snapshot" on the main page of the site - a parent may not be certain of the purpose that category represents. Suggestion made to possibly label as 'Snapshot of Delaware Schools' or something more identifiable.
- Also within "Snapshot," bottom link to "All Schools in Delaware" somewhat difficult to find. Additionally, not easily understood how to see information for a whole district. The "+" drop down lists schools within a district, but to get the information for the district, you have to click on the district name. It was noted that the team worked toward the least number of clicks to quickly access particular information.

- In looking at enrollment numbers, the “n” size is important but just percentages are given. This would require one to calculate to arrive at actual numbers. Would prefer to see actual numbers as well.
- One comment noted that when you review schools, it is user friendly, for example locating topic information such as climate/culture. If you are not clear on some of the information, you can click on a description bar, which provides additional descriptive information.
- Look at clarifying the definition for chronic absenteeism on “Snapshot.”
- Comment was made in using different devices, i.e., cell phones, iPads, platforms have difficulty in accessing links and being able to hover over information. The department will come up with a recommended set of platforms for optimum use.

PHASE II

- Map Integration: Presently, there is an application called School Finder where you can type in an address and find the school your child should attend. In some form, this will soon be integrated, or something similar, with the state report card so a parent can see his/her child’s feeder pattern for the schools the child will attend. In addition, it will provide maps to view where a school is located. This will also be helpful for kindergarten registration.
- Translation: Important priority the department is working on at this time. Currently, the site is only available in English, and translation must be provided in multiple languages. Also looking at working with Google to use Google Translate, so that any language can interpret the information on the site.
- Story Box/Guiding Questions/DDOE Supports: Continuing to add more information to description bars for better understanding and to better decipher the data presented on the site. Challenges are to find the best phrasing to be used for explanations to the data.
- Report Card Print PDF: There is a button where you can download spreadsheets for data on the site. For example, on a bar graph, there is a button at the top that allows you to download a spreadsheet with the data used to create the graph. Department working on making it possible to print the entire page as well.
- District/Charter Personalization – On the site, there is an area for a superintendent/head of school message. The department is looking into additional ways to personalize district/charter display.
- Suppression Enhancement: Adrian Peoples and the DDOE Data Management and Governance team created a program that is being utilized by multiple states due to the importance of ensuring student privacy. Sometimes, when data is suppressed, there may not be anything to report. Therefore, the end user is not viewing any information. The department created a universal bar that has a lock on it, so when one sees it, you know that there is student information there but is suppressed due to too low an n-count to report. Work continues on this to show data, but not provide identifying information. Question was posed as to if there is anything to indicate what the “n” size is? For most areas, a link is available to view actual rules that identifies the number.
- Video/Guiding Documents: The department will be adding videos/tutorials for families/public that provide a walkthrough of the site and what the data means and how to interpret. Desire is to get to as many as stakeholders as possible viewing and understanding the information.

General question was posed if we have capabilities to compare schools. At this time, this function is not available, but multiple formats are being reviewed and will be shared with stakeholder groups for future improvement.

AMENDMENTS

The Department plans to submit two amendments. Deadline is March 1st to implement changes for this school year.

1. Identification Cycle Updates: Request to change the timeline for identifying the next cohort of CSI and TSI schools from November 2021 to November 2022. This allows currently identified schools to have the full three years to implement their plans prior to identifying the next cohort.

2. Statewide Science and Social Studies Assessments: Waive use in accountability model calculations until 2019-2020 due to technical quality studies that need to be completed for the assessments. Results of these studies will not be available until after accountability calculations for the 18/19 school year are reported.

Assessment and current testing system discussion

- Questions were posed if federal law requires Delaware to have state assessment. Yes, testing is required for every school, every year for grades 3-8, and one grade in high school; Delaware chose grade 11. Also, does federal law require Delaware to tie in educator evaluation to student achievement? There is no federal requirement. Questions led to further discussion of assessment and the current testing system in schools. Suggestion was to gather multiple stakeholders to further discuss and develop potential solutions.
- Other conversation points shared by group:
 - Continue to review Smarter Balanced test practices and results.
 - Important to reach out to stakeholders to work together. Share ideas across the state.
 - DDOE Assessment team looking at testing calendars, length of time on testing, time of year testing occurs.
 - Decisions need to be made and still meet federal requirements with consideration of what is best for the student.
 - Seems a great deal of time is spent on testing students and should be reviewed.
 - Identifying and reducing duplicative testing. Especially seems more heightened for the kindergarten level. Could better ways be identified to utilize assessment data already available?
 - Timely feedback is an ongoing problem with existing testing system. The data is not back in time to impact the current school year for instruction. Consider returning to testing multiple times during the year, allowing feedback to focus on areas that need more attention. Objective to find ways of meaningful feedback in a timely manner.
 - Summer and all the weeks of not having instruction, is this creating issues?
 - Federal Innovative Grant, currently a pilot in some states. DDOE will review states' efforts and outcomes.
 - Include student perspective – example activities to get students to want to positively participate and do well in testing.
 - SAT testing – should every student be tested in Delaware? Overall, nationally Delaware does not rank well, even though we have individuals score very high.
 - Ideas such as portfolios for state assessment could be considered and using PSAT data instead.

Suggested action of this group is to continue to discuss, develop, and implement plans of action.

REVIEWING PRACTICES

- Regional Education Laboratory (REL): The Department is exploring the potential to work with REL to research and review TSI-2 identification trends across multiple states.
- Growth to Proficiency: Reviewing current practices so current metrics yield proficiency by grade 8.
- Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC): The department often receives questions around Smarter Balanced assessments. Concerns as to why consortium states have low proficiency scores. Department working with SBAC for more overall information.
- Report Card Phase II: Updates to be provided at next committee meeting.
- Highlighting evidenced-based practices: Major part of ESSA is using evidence-based rather than research practices. DDOE is visiting districts that have demonstrated good practices and highlighting those practices. Additionally, the University of Delaware is conducting a research study behind the practices and will show what is happening in

schools and the research behind it. The hope is to complete three studies by the end of the school year, with two schools highlighted in each. This information will be shared with all.

BEYOND ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

ESSA is much larger than just accountability; equally important is how we are working with students. What are the pieces that make ESSA strong?

- Greater emphasis on stakeholder engagement.
- Emphasis on individual sub-group achievement and identify all resources for funding opportunities.
- Allowing states to develop alternate academic achievement standards for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.
- Expand access to professional development for school leaders and teachers.
- Focus on evidence based practices.
- Title IV – Looking at the whole child to include safe and healthy schools, optimum use of technology. Minimum of \$10,000 available to every district. Title IV allows for more flexibility to use funds in desired areas.

At this time the committee participated in a brief group activity to look at excerpts from Delaware's ESSA Plan and consider what the information may mean for the individual, what does it look like in their school and what they would like to know more about.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No formal public comment was received.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue to implement ESSA to its full potential to support continuous improvement.
- Keep in touch with one another.
- Take some time to check out schools to see ESSA in action.

CONCLUSION

- Meeting minutes will be sent to committee members.
- Date for the next meeting will be sent soon to committee members.
- Follow-up on various suggestions made during this meeting.
- The meeting adjourned at 7:08 PM.